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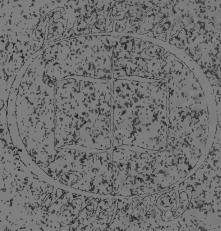
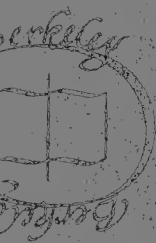
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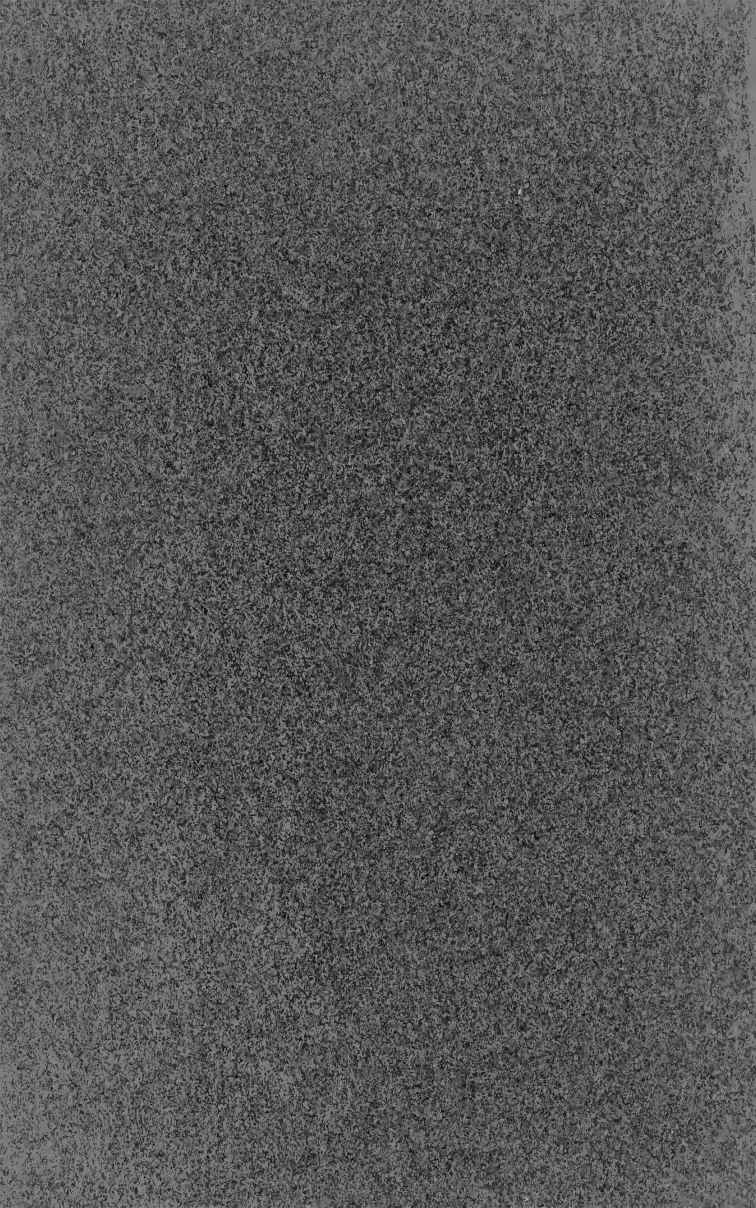
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VERSES OLD AND NEW.

BY

HELENA CALLANAN,

ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND,

CORK.

PRINTED AT THE EAGLE WORKS, SOUTH MALL & SMITH STREET.

1899.

TO WHOM
IT MAY COME

INSCRIPTION.

Inscribed respectfully with gratitude to the kindest of Editors, the REV. MATHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

PREFACE.

In offering this collection of simple verses to the public, I am perfectly conscious that they possess little or no claim to literary merit. But, remembering the kind consideration with which a previous little volume—"Gathered Leaflets"—was received, I am encouraged to collect the verses I have written since then, together with a few cullings from "Gathered Leaflets" by special request. This explains the title, "Verses Old and New." I am also encouraged by the kindness of many friends who have promised, both personally and through their acquaintances, to help in the sale of my little book.

HELENA CALLANAN,

Asylum for the Blind, Infirmary Road.

August 11th, 1898.

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A Shamrock.

WRITTEN FOR AN ALBUM.

THERE are thoughts sweet perfume breathing,
Bright and sage and full of beauty,
Culled from past and present ages,
O'er thy album's pages strewn.
From the rich domains of fancy
Loving hands with care have gathered
Every bud of sweetest meaning—
They were planted all too soon.

Else I might find some stray blossom
With fresh dew of thought upon it ;
Yet I fain with thy fair garland
Would one tiny field-flower twine—
One green spray of native shamrock,
Fragrant with historic mem'ries,
On each leaf in letters golden
I'd engrave a gift divine.

Faith, firm Faith, bright, strong, enduring—
Faith, that life's fierce storm and passion
Shall pass by, and leave unclouded ;
 Be this blessing thine for aye.
Hope, that glimmereth through darkness,
Charms the present, gilds the future,
With warm rays of heaven's glory,
 Imaging eternal day.

Love, God's crown of bliss, outshining
All the joys e'er known or dreamed of,
Perfect as thy fairest vision,
 Be this treasure thine, to keep.
In thy inmost heart close folded,
May it ever walk beside thee,
Safe without regrets or shadows,
 Fears to fright, or tears to weep.

In the pages yet ungarnished
Wilt thou give my shamrock welcome
Only for the fervent wishes
 Fondly wreathed around the stem ?
Tribute to thy grace and beauty,
And the mellow light of kindness
That illumines thy gentle spirit,
 And thy heart, thy purest gem.

May in the City.

THE roses opening to the sun
 Proclaim that winter's work is done ;
 May, like her own fair Queen of Love,
 With blessings o'er the earth doth move ;
 In thrills and shakes the whole day long
 My birdie fills the hours with song,
 And happy as in woodland gay,
 Echoes the revelry of May.

Be glad, my heart, for summer's come,
 And, e'en to this poor city home,
 The welcome time of light and flowers
 Shall bring good gifts and happy hours.
 Here, in this squalid, crowded street,
 Where weary hearts, 'mid toil and heat,
 Life's burdens bear from day to day,
 E'en here we know thee, blushing May.

So far away from fields and woods
 Green, sunny meads, cool solitudes,
 Without one glimpse of country fair,
 And scarce a breath of pure, fresh air,

A beam from the bright heaven of blue
Will stray some attic window through,
And longing eyes in summer's ray
Hail the glad messenger of May.

From early morn to eve I hear
The merry bird-notes ringing clear—
The notes that e'en in winter's gloom
Made summer music in my room.
Here, though no dewy bud is seen,
Nor blossom white, nor leaf of green,
No warbler perched on hawthorn spray
Could sing a sweeter song of May.

But sometimes I could pity thee,
So wasted seems thy melody,
Lost in the city's toil and din,
'Mid sounds of discord, strife and sin ;
Yet, birdie, sing of flowers and streams,
And with bright pictures fill the dreams
Of many, who, through life's rough way,
See but faint images of May.

Father Mathew.

ONCE, in our city by the Lee,
The golden bond of charity
Together bound three hearts as leal
As ever beat for Ireland's weal ;
Each with the same grand mission blest,
Though none the other's creed professed,
Shades of opinion, creed and class,
Were all dissolved to save the mass.

The Christian man whose genial ways
Out-lived the memory of his days,
Whose heart o'erflowed with sympathy
For all God's human family,*
Embraced the cause with one whose life
A precept preached 'gainst brawl and strife ; †
Both marked the ardent priest and knew
Their cause had gained a champion true.

* Mr. Richard Dowden Richard. † Mr. William Martin.

They saw, behind the modest veil,
Vast stores of energy and zeal,
That could a golden harvest glean—
Nor had their inspiration been
A futile hope, they woke the fire
That flamed into a grand desire :
To war with drink and take firm stand
Against the evil of our land.

Like light in darkness Mathew came,
To break the chains of guilt and shame
That tramelled with a dark disgrace
The children of the Irish race.
'Twas his high destiny to win
Thousands of souls from vice and sin.
The stoutest heart might quail to see
Our bondage worse than slavery.

The friar, in humble habit clad,
Passed o'er the land and made it glad.
Hope crowned, invigorated, free,
From base, degrading misery ;
His blessing fructified the earth.
His pledge brought peace to every hearth,
The sunny radiance of his smile
From East to West lit up our isle.

Men followed him with love and awe,
 They recognised his word as law.
 'Twas not his eloquence sublime
 That sent his voice from clime to clime,
 But that deep, earnest power, that dwells
 Where truth with charity excels,
 And Father Mathew's pledge and name
 A sacred spell-word soon became !

Priest, Friend, and great philanthropist,
 Few could his grace and charm resist ;
 The children gathered round his way,
 As if they knew how proud, one day,
 Would be their privilege to tell
 That on their ears his accents fell,
 That they had seen his kindly face—
 The saviour of their age and race.

Bright in our country's annals shine
 The preachers of the Word Divine,
 Nor can the proudest nation boast
 The record of a truer host.
 Of minstrels, poets, scholars, we
 Can count a glorious galaxy ;
 But Ireland twines round Mathew's name
 The fairest chaplet of her fame.

Deep in her virgin heart enshrined
 He lives, the friend of all mankind—
 The tender, loving, Christian man
 Who raised the flag and led the van
 Of noble souls, who, armed with right,
 Went forth to battle with the might
 Of Demon Drink, and check the course
 Sweeping the land with cataract force.

In peace, fair city by the Lee,
 They sleep, the venerated three ;
 But they were with us in our need,
 They sowed the good, enduring seed :
 To every worker in the field
 May God a precious harvest yield,
 And fairest fruitage of success
 Their noble efforts crown and bless.

Honour the Fifty Veterans.

(The fifty veterans were those who received the pledge from Father Mathew ; they formed the vanguard of his Centenary procession in Cork).

A CENTURY has passed away,
To swell time's mighty river,
And many a good seed in the grave
Of years is lost for ever ;
Still is an humble friar's name
By all the world revered,
His spirit lives to-day to bless
The land his life hath cheered.
And fair among the brilliant gems
Around his memory twining,
We hail the fifty veterans true
Who kept his lustre shining.

Where flows the Lee in beauty's pride
Through woodland valleys green,
Tracing its silver windings clear
By many a sylvan scene.

'Twas there that Mathews' golden words
First filled with hope the nation,
And fell upon our darkened land
Like light of revelation ;
When class with class, and creed with creed
To praise his deeds are vying,
Foremost they held the vanguard true
Who kept his banner flying.

They crowned his name with fairest wreathes
Of legend, song and story,
One dear to Ireland and to fame.
Enshrined his life in glory.
To Cork-a-More from England's shore
And from the land of heather,
With joy they come to Mathews' home
To honour him together.
Let youthful hearts resolve to-day
That, scoff and jeer defying,
They, like the fifty veterans true,
Will keep his banner flying.

In the Star Light.

THE old man touched the fiddle strings,
The fire was burning low,
They woke a dream of many things
Out of the long ago.
The tender music and the hush
Of softly fading day,
Brought back the glory and the flush
Of far-off sunny May.
The old man touched the fiddle strings,
The fire was burning low,
And dreamed sweet dreams of many things
In vanished long ago.

Again he loitered by the stream
To gather cresses sweet,
Or lingered in the autumn beam,
To pluck the rich, ripe wheat.
Once more with measure gay and light
He waked the merry dance,
And marked on dear, lost faces bright
The smile and love-lit glance.

The old man touched the fiddle strings,
Faint shone the embers' glow,
The hour gave back the echoings
Of distant long ago.

His old companions, one by one,
Along the vale of years
Summoned the gladness and the sun,
Summoned the shades and tears,
Passed by and left him at the gate
That opes into the West,
Amid the twilight mist to wait
The messenger of rest.
The old man dropped the fiddle strings,
The stars were shining fair,
The rustling of an angel's wings
Made music in the air.



A Promise.

THE robin pipes o'er baby's rest
 His song in the elm-tree old,
 Baby smiled on his mother's breast,
 When autumn turned the leaves to gold :
 But when the snow-drifts virgin-white
 Were lying thick on hill and plain,
 At Mary's feet with angels bright
 Baby carolled his Christmas strain.

Keen blew the bleak December wind
 The day our nursling's grave was made,
 Not e'en a leafy wreath was twined
 Or blossom on his coffin laid.
 The tiny grave looked cold and dry.
 We, with the trouble and the prayer
 To still our hearts' impatient cry,
 Forgot to place a flower-gift there.

But, darling, when the woods are green,
 When summer visits all the bowers,
 When balmy breath and fervid sheen
 With kisses wake the sleeping flowers ;
 I'll bring the roses, white and red,
 And wild flowers culled from wood and lea,
 To watch above thy cradle bed
 And weep their dewy tears for thee.



The Chapel Bell.

ALONG the dew-gemmed fields and woods,
Over the shamrock-spangled hills,
Through the green-hearted solitudes,
The sunny glades and sparkling rills,
Glad sounds are ringing sweet and clear,
Blest sounds, that I no more shall hear
On Irish ground. Oh ! never more
I'll wait beside my cottage door,
Or loiter in the pleasant dell,
To hear the welcome Chapel Bell.

The ship lies waiting in the bay,
And ere another Sabbath light
Gleams on the church-yard, old and grey,
The storied panes, the altar white,
The grave, the altar, and the cot,
And every memory-haunted spot,

The friends I loved, so warm and true,
All shall have faded from my view,
Mine eye shall weep a long farewell
To Ireland, home, and Chapel Bell.

Our fathers met, in days of old,
In lonely cave or green hill-side,
And there the blessed Beads were told,
And there, by stealth, the Crucified
Came down from heaven in lowly guise,
To warm their hearts, and hush their sighs.
Oft from the altar to the rack
Their footsteps left a gory track.
On gibbet dark, in convict cell,
They died for love of Chapel Bell.

Those days were dark, but God knew best,
And now, throughout our Ireland green,
From North to South, from East to West,
The sign of Calvary is seen.
Unfettered now, each man may kneel,
And to his God his heart reveal,
In thousands now our people pass
In sun-bright day to holy Mass,
And prayerful anthems grateful swell
Responsive to the Chapel Bell.

How often, in the days to come,
Those Sabbath chimes and Sabbath lays
Shall haunt me in my distant home,
Like echoes from my early days !
Though other lands may bring me gain
'Tis hard to bear the exile's pain,
My yearning heart still pines for thee,
Blest cradle of my infancy !
For, ah ! the blessings who can tell
Of Irish faith and Chapel Bell.

The Little Violinist.

ONCE in the May-time long ago
A dear child-angel came to me,
She blossomed 'neath love's rose-red glow,
And filled my life with melody ;
For God within her heart and mind
A priceless jewel hath enshrined.
It seemed as if a seraph's hand
Had touched her soul, and woke the strings
Of music, passionate and bland.
And filled with heaven's echoings,
Till her pure spirit seemed to be
Attuned to perfect harmony.

With music as a child she played—
I see her as I saw her then—
The baby fingers lightly strayed
Along her treasured violin ;
The sunbeams hidden in her hair,
Her lovely soul-lit face a prayer ;
The blue eyes filled with liquid tears,
Moved by her own sweet plaintive strains ;
Till, gazing, I forgot her years,
Forgot earth's sorrows, losses, pains,
And had no thought but one of praise
To Him who solaced thus my days.

With trembling hope, and pleasure rare,
 I watched my darling's pearl of fame,
Her wondrous gift, that promised fair
 In distant lands to crown her name.
 To scatter joys around her way
 Made life a pleasant holiday.
I could not stray from virtue's ways,
 Her presence, like the breath of grace,
With innocence perfumed my days,
 And summer made in darkest place.
 Beneath her love earth blooming smiled
 Yet she was but a little child.

And while we two walked in the light
 Of happy joys too deep to tell,
And each day gave her charms more bright,
 I saw not where the shadows fell ;
 I felt no warning chill of fear
 To whisper sorrow hovered near.
It found my heart one Sabbath day,
 And shattered all my golden dream ;
I saw my treasure fade away
 As fades the lily by the stream ;
 The hopes of years lay crushed and hid
 Beneath a little coffin lid.

The ringing of the Sabbath bells,
The sunlight fading on the sea,
Primroses peeping in the dells,
All speak and breathe of her to me ;
In all things beautiful and sweet
I see and hear my Marguerite.
One day this dark, dark hour will pass,
And to embalm thy memory,
Low kneeling in the tender grass
I'll bring my patience palm to thee,
With holy resignation blest,
“ May-flower, I know thy lot is best.”

Forgive me, Maggie ! music's child,
That lyric gems I cannot weave,
Only a spray of daisies wild
Laid on thy grave this fair May eve.
Ah ! didst thou live, how many a pen
Would praise thee and thy violin.
I only try my little part
In sympathy's all-soothing power,
To plant within a father's heart
The smallest seed of comfort's flower,
And, 'mid the bitter weeds of grief,
To cast one tiny shining leaf.

Western Wind.

FIRST VERSE NOT ORIGINAL.

BRING her again, O western wind,
Over the western sea,
Gentle and good, and fair and kind,
Bring her again to me ;
Not that her fancy holds me dear,
Not that a hope may be,
Only that I may know her near,
Wind of the western sea.

Bring her with all her winning grace
Out of the shades to me,
Sunshine of heart, and charm of face,
And voice of melody ;
While the glad strains of vanished hours
Wake silent harmony,
Bring her like scent of sweet wild-flowers,
Wind of the western sea.

Only to make the present glow
With tender rosy beams,
Treasured from lights of long ago,
Like scenes revived in dreams ;
Breathe her dear name, soft sighing breeze,
Whisper it secretly,
Laden with golden memories,
Wind of the western sea.



A Ballad.

AN OLD MAN'S PRAYER.

“**B**ACK—to well-beloved Ireland,
While my failing eyes can see
Her green hills and pleasant valleys,
And her rivers rushing free.
Now, farewell, brave land of freedom,
Fortune, fame and friends I've met
On your shores, but round my heart-strings
Is the old land twining yet.”
It was thus an old man murmured
When we first put out to sea,
And at morning, noon, and evening,
Thus he prayed incessantly.

“ Back—to brave enduring Ireland,
Where, in bitterness and tears,
The glad smile of hope shone ever
Like a rainbow in dark years ;
Where the blood of many thousands
Of her glorious martyred land
Made the gospel ray shine brighter,
Grace diffusing through the land.”
Thus he prayed his prayer of longing
As the ship sped o'er the sea,
Till in hearts that prayer re-echoed
Like an old sweet melody.

“ Back—to sainted patient Ireland,
 Faithful still in pain and loss,
 With her brave arms ever ready
 ‘To embrace God’s blessed cross ;
 Sighing out her many sorrows
 In sad tale or thrilling song,
 Till her children, nigh despairing,
 Cry ‘ O Lord ! how long, how long ! ’ ”
 Long the voyage seemed, and weary,
 To the isle of destiny,
 And the old man’s voice grew feeble,
 But he prayed more fervently.

“ Back—to genial, courteous Ireland,
 To the friends, the haunts I knew,
 To the kindly loving people,
 And her *soggarts*—oh, so true ;
 Where the welcome joins with blessings
 In the dear soft Gaelic tongue,
 Where the prayer, ‘ God speed ye,’ trembles
 On the lips of old and young.”
 Every morning saw the old man
 Gazing sadly out to sea,
 And the hush of evening found him
 Praying still on bended knee.

“Take—me back to fettered Ireland,
For 'tis from her virgin sod
That my soul would wing in freedom
To the city of her God.
Mother, Mary, Queen of Heaven,
True to thee my land hath been,
And I know that thou wilt give me
Strength to reach my crownless Queen.”
Mingled with the wind's wild sobbing,
And the surging of the sea,
Rose that prayer of warm devotion
With increasing fervency.

“Haste, good ship, the shadows gather,
And the long night draweth nigh,
Land, the land I love, is nearing,
All is peace—now I may die.
I shall rest behind the chapel
Where the kindly neighbours pass,
They will pray God's mercy on me
Coming out from Sunday's Mass.”
Now his voice is faint and feeble,
But we heard it on the sea,
Praying for a grave in Ireland—
E'en a grave there sweet would be.

One May evening through the valley
Where his childhood years were passed,
Tenderly they bore the old man
To his longed-for home at last.
'Neath the shamrock turf they laid him,
On green Erin's mother breast,
In the homely country churchyard
With his kindred hearts at rest.
From the land of his adoption—
Refuge of the brave and free—
For a grave in holy Ireland
He had journeyed o'er the sea.



A Conundrum.

I'm writ of in story, I'm chanted in song,
 And rare are the charms that to me belong,
 A thing of fair beauty, with gems sparkling o'er,
 Bright turquoise and star-pearls carpet my floor ;
 A household companion that gives welcome glad
 To the home-comer weary, and cheers him when sad.
 I'm green as the em'rald, I'm black as the sloe,
 Yet out from my heart shines the vermilion glow ;
 The hopes that are dearest are pledged on my breast,
 And many a cherished hope finds in me rest.
 A friend in all seasons, a national treasure,
 For miles over mountains men bear me with pleasure ;
 The palace of fairies, the birth-place of flowers,
 Youth sports on my bosom in bright summer hours ;
 And often above me, at eve's misty haze,
 Age tells of the visions that lighted past days.
 Yet though rare are the charms that to me belong,
 To hearts and to homes I've brought sorrow and wrong,
 Shattered hopes, blackened honour, robbed life of its bloom,
 And planted the cypress o'er many a tomb.
 For ever the upas flower twines round my name,
 Dark ruin and misery, falsehood and shame,
 Their baneful shades cast o'er this joy-gift you prize,
 Like most fairest blessings beneath Heaven's skies.

The Child's Fetch.

BILL toiled as hard as any of us,
Since dawn of early day,
Yet well I knew he'd no heart for work
And his thoughts were far away ;
His eyes were dim from the long night-watch
By his pale wee girleen's bed.
Dropping his spade with a weary air,
" I'll just step to home," he said,
" And see how the child is doing,"
So I bade him a kind " God-speed."
Maureen, the last of the little flock
'Twas so hard to clothe and feed,
Would soon be under the daisy-blooms,
And his home an empty nest ;
Who'd see poor Bill and the old wife laid
With their kith and kin at rest ?

The flowers drooped low in the rich still air,
So fierce was the sun's red blush
The song-birds sat on the branching bough
Too lazy to break the hush
I always feel in the summer's prime
Deep yearnings, I know not why,

The dead and heaven seem nearer earth,
 Or earth seems nearer the sky.
 I stood by the lilac tree that grows
 The informer's grave beside
 (He bartered for gold the brave boys' lives,
 Next night the traitor died),
 Fixing my eyes on Bill's cabin door,
 Soon I saw it backwards swing,
 Then, sure as the moon shines round us here,
 There happened this strange weird thing.

Maureen stepped out on the sunny sward,
 I saw her as plain as day,
 The bare brown feet, the muckinger* white,
 And rocket of wincey grey.
 You may call it a dream or a fancy,
 There the colleen stood and smiled,
 Now what could Bill be talking about,
 Or was he with trouble wild?
 Yet the child was shadow-like and changed,
 As if under charm or spell,
 The sunbeams made her a path of light
 As crimson and gold they fell;
 Upward and onward she seemed to float,
 Above the flowers and the grass,
 I watched her far o'er the wooded cliffs
 And along the valley pass.

*MUCKINGER—A Pinafore.

She seemed to blend with the golden haze
And fade from my straining sight,
And I felt a creeping kind of dread
Like passing a grave at night.
Half-dazed I stood by the lilac old,
Nor moved till somebody said :
“ God help us, John, 'tis a black bleak world,
Bill Connelly's child is dead.”
Then, ringing loud in the silent fields.
Wild wailings of anguish rose,
The mother's passionate Irish keen,
Thrilling our hearts with its woes.
Yes, call it a dream or a fancy,
I saw it as now I see
The shimmering sheen of the moonbeams,
Your face, and the lilac tree.



The Treasure from the Old Land.

SHE left for lack of daily bread,
Home, country, friends and race,
Youth's summer bloom was in her heart,
Youth's glory on her face,
When last she saw the setting sun
Gild fair Lough Corrib's shore,
And knew that pleasant fading scene
Would greet her eyes no more.

“Cead mille failthe, father,
Sure you're welcome as the May,
In Southern Africa I've grown
Full weary, old and gray ;
Yet Ireland holds my heart in chains
Strong, tender, true and fond,
I love her tongue, her priests, her saints,
Her faith, all gifts beyond.

“An Irish priest, Ah ! God be praised !
There is music in the words ;
I see the misty shrouded pines,
The shamrocks and the birds,
The chapel at the mountain's foot,
The church-yard and the wood,
The shieling on the bleak road-side
Where oft our soggarth stood.

“ Our hearts with bitter trouble then
Were sore and black as night,
But when he crossed the threshold, sure
It made the cold hearts bright ;
Like sunshine on the cabin floor
He left his words to cheer,
Hard things seemed easier to bear,
And heaven and rest more near.

“ I'm happy, as your Reverence says,
In such good company,
The Sacred Heart, Our Lady, and
St. Joseph—Blessed Three—
With dear St. Patrick, yes, 'tis true
I have my treasures rare,
And father, see, a precious gift
Rests on my table there.

“ 'Tis nothing but a sod of turf
That came from holy Knock,
I prize it more than pearls or gold
Kept under bolt and lock.
They'll place it with my rosary
Deep in the strange earth here—
I won't seem lonesome-like and chill
With such old friends so near.

“And, father, ’tis such joy to hear
The tender Gaelic tongue,
Though bowed beneath three score and ten
My heart again feels young.
Again I sit beside the sea
As oft in youth’s green day,
And watch the great proud ships that sail
Away from Galway bay.”

Her wealth in foreign lands was but
A shanty bare and mean,
Yet could she call that home her own
In her loved island green.
No need had she to wrench the ties
That make life’s happiness,
A heart content, a mind at peace,
A little joy can bless.

A Bridal Wish.

FROM my inmost heart upswelling,
 To thy happy southern dwelling,
 Greetings fond I send thee, dear ;
 Now the golden summer's here
 Showering all its wealth upon us,
 Love, with summer's radiant face,
 Hailing thee with sweetest music,
 Offers thee his gift of promise.

In the flush of morning glory
 On life's opening rose-hued story,
 The sunshine softly lying
 Sweet melody low sighing ;
 Thy pure heart youth's songs are singing
 Flowers of hope thy footsteps twining,
 From thy lips bright laughter ringing
 In thy eyes faith's clear light shining.

Could I gather up earth's treasures,
 With an affluence of pleasures
 I would circle all thy days,
 From young spring to winter's haze.
 Whate'er thou shouldst deem the fairest,
 I would shower with lavish hand
 Priceless gifts, the best and rarest,
 And beautiful as thine own land,

Such bright gifts I may not bring thee,
Nought but love my thoughts can wing thee,
In these simple lines enshrined
Are my hearts best wishes twined ;
Herald be thy bridal hour
Of long years of faith and blessing,
God, rich graces be thy dower,
And thy joy His love possessing.



The Sweetest Songs of All.

(Music by J. C. Marks.)

EVERY land enshrines the story
Of the misty bygone days,
In the ever faithful records
Of her legends and her lays.
Songs of love and martial music,
That awake at battle's call,
But the tender Irish ballads,
Are the sweetest songs of all.

CHORUS—Weirdly sad, wildly glad,
Hope and friendship, love and beauty,
They recall.

When the exile in his wand'rings
Some remembered home song hears,
Back with magic swiftness, fancy
Flits across the distant years ;
And again the glowing summer
Tints the old woods far away,
And the peals of silvery laughter
Echo blithe among the hay.

CHORUS—Love shines fair, joys that were
Smiling greet us, fond friends meet us
Like youth's day.

Dear home ballads, life's companions
Faithful friends on land and wave—
Ye are with us in all changes
From the cradle to the grave ;
Soft ye play upon the heart strings,
Till the tears unbidden fall—
For the tender Irish ballads
Are the sweetest songs of all.

CHORUS—Weirdly sad, wildly glad,
Hope and friendship, love and beauty,
They recall.



Shandon Bells.

By the far Canadian river,
In the sunset's ruddy gleaming,
Where the pine trees wail and quiver,
See an Irish Exile dreaming,
As the shades of evening fell.
Through the forest dim and sombre,
Stealing solemn, sweet and slowly,
Soft across the old man's slumber,
Like a strain of music holy
Broke the distant vesper bell.

Like the spirit of lost pleasure,
To his inmost soul appealing
Rose and fell the tuneful measure,
Sweeping all the cords of feeling,
Weaving tender, wondrous spells.
Then a sea of vanished faces
Through the mist of years, bright glancing,
Gazed at him from youth's green places,
Where the Lee, 'neath sunlight dancing
Ripples under Shandon Bells.

He could hear them ringing, ringing,
Clear across the scented meadows,
Far and wide the sweet voice flinging
O'er the hills, through veiling shadows,
In the mellow twilight glow.
To his ear their welcome chiming,
Floating on the summer glory,
Seemed like poet's music rhyming,
In a quaint and pleasant story,
Visions of the long ago.

Oh ! the joy, of once more straying
By St. Mary's sun crowned steeple,
In the golden days decaying,
With the kindly social people,
Binding long and severed ties.
Faded was the lonely present ;
He had gazed on beauties rarest ;
Friendship's clasp and voices pleasant
Made that spot on earth the fairest
Blooming 'neath God's blessed skies.

One by one life's blossoms vernal,
Crushed and withered, fell around him ;
But the gift of peace eternal
In that distant region found him ;
For the memory—haunting strain.

Of the Bells melodious sweetness,
Swift as light on darkness breaking,
With the power of magic fleetness,
Swept away his hearts sad aching
Gave him back his youth again.

'Twas a dream that came to cheer him,
And his soul's last prayer, low breath'd,
As the deep shades hastened near him,
Blessings round the old land wreath'd
And the dying echoes passed.
"Shandon Bells of fair Lough Eire,"
Sang in numbers sweet, harmonious,
By a genius of the Lyre,
And his crown of song symphonious
Long as minstrelsy shall last.



The Statue of Our Lady at Queenstown.

Of course it will be understood that emigration for the Irish does not now cause the heart-breaking misery which it did when this poem was written.

ON Cork's fair Cove the Virgin Queen looks down,
With tender love her image guards the town,
On the noble Church-bower enthroned, she stands,
Blessing the harbour with uplifted hands—
Giving the exiles their first welcome home,
Lighting their path far o'er the western foam,
As o'er the vessel's side they landward lean,
And waft a farewell to their Island Green.

Old friends, loved voices, cannot reach the main
That whispered courage while they hid their pain,
From Ireland's children on the lonely sea
Breaks forth the wail of piteous misery.
As fades the last warm tint of emerald hue,
But Mary's smile still greets their eager view—
A star-crowned vision, in the distance seen,
The last fair vista of their Island Green.

From their full hearts their fervent blessings rise
On her sweet name who heard their yearning sighs,
Who made them strong to suffer and be brave,
To welcome death and e'en a pauper's grave.
When sorely tempted in their direst needs
To shun the cross, the statue, and the beads,
O'er bigot tyranny and grim want keen
The Virgin's star illumed our Island Green.

"Twas wisely planned to set her image there
Amid wild scenes of sorrow and despair—
'Twas there that Orleans' great prelate said :
" More bitter tears than on God's earth are shed."
Where ties are rent for starving kindred sake
While kindred hearts in lonely anguish break ;
On ocean's bosom ne'er was cast I wee'n,
A sadder freight than leaves our Island Green.

They know not if their steps again shall tread
The holy fanes where rest their sainted dead,
Or press the shamrock turf above the graves
Of friends who may not follow o'er the waves ;
Yet hope is strong, once more to breathe thy breath
Loved land of crosses and of greenest faith ;
Could they from fortune a rich harvest glean,
To meet Death's Angel on their Island Green

Sweet Mother, keep them ever near to thee,
May thy pure life in theirs reflected be ;
Oh ! there are perils in that far strange land—
Our children need to hold a mother's hand,
To keep the pearl of Faith unstained and bright,
As when they knelt in garments spotless white
Singing her praises in the twilight sheen,
In some old chapel in our Island Green.

Bright Stella Maris ! through the tempest dark
Of life's fierce combat guide the exiles barque,
Be thou the mirror of true womanhood
To Irish maidens, lone and destitute,
With sweet allurements draw their hearts to thine,
Around their souls each tender memory twine ;
Of that pure, fearless faith that e'er hath been
The pride and glory of our Island Green.



“ Summer.”

THERE are flowers in the valleys,
There is sunshine on the hills,
Through the bowers and leafy alleys
The warm breath of Summer thrills ;
Gentle airs are softly blowing,
Pearly streamlets blithely flowing
Nature's music gushing clear,
Rippling through the vale and wildwood,
Like the voice of happy childhood ;
With glad greeting hail the Summer,
Fairest season of the year !

Summer meets us rich and golden,
Shedding beauty o'er the earth,
Every hour new charms unfolding,
Filling all the land with mirth,
Bringing smiles to brows of sadness ;
Sights and sounds of light and gladness
Soothe the heart and please the ear.
Happy birds through air-land winging,
Sweetest salutations singing—
Hail, bright Summer ! glad we greet thee,
Fairest season of the year !

Nesting in the bright June roses
 Dripping still with dews of May,
 Summer 'mid the buds reposes,
 Till they blush beneath his ray,
 And from out their opening blushes
 Such a stream of fragrance rushes,
 We forget the winter drear.
 Snow-crowned hills and mountains hoary
 Bask in floods of Summer glory ;
 Hail, bright Summer ! glad we greet thee,
 Fairest season of the year !

On the banks are children playing,
 Mirrored in the brook beneath ;
 Or away in green fields straying,
 Weaving many a daisy wreath ;
 Golden hair, like sunbeams streaming
 Blue eyes, love and sweetness beaming,
 Yet undimmed by sorrow's tear.
 Gather, little ones, your flowers,
 Offspring of the rosy hours—
 Hail, bright Summer ! glad we greet thee,
 Fairest season of the year !

Happy children, 'tis your season,
Twine your chaplets while you may,
Ere the sterner voice of reason
Calls you from your sportive play.
Innocence your hearts possessing,
Bless the sense of every blessing,
Lisp His name in accents clear,
Praise Him for the morning splendour
For the twilight soft and tender.
Hail, bright Summer ! glad we greet thee,
Fairest season of the year !

Nature fair, unclasp thy pages,
Rich with poetry divine,
Inspiration of all ages,
Ever pure exhaustless mine !
Help us now, O vast creation
Songs to raise of adoration,
Gratitude and love sincere.
Warm hearts gushing reach God's dwelling,
Joyful strains heaven's glory telling.
Hail, bright Summer ! glad we greet thee,
Fairest season of the year !

Richard Welsted Day.

DIED FEBRUARY 26TH, 1891.

“ All the souls of those that die, are but sunbeams lifted higher.”—

Longfellow.

GREENER than shamrocks,
Sweeter than violets, ,
Brighter than laurels, and fairer than fame,
Are the sweet thoughts of him.
Gleaming thro' shadows dim,
Out of the tracks of light gilding his name.
Dead ! with deep pain and ruth,
Heard we the dreaded truth,
And the dim hope of the slow dragging hours
Withered in tears we lay
On his low bed to-day
'Mid the young grasses and fresh gathered flowers.

Sadly on every tongue
Low, tender wailing hung,
Where, as but yesterday, wandered his feet,
Mournfully heart to heart
Out in the busy mart
Echoed regret for the bright life so fleet.

So dark the shadow cast
Where late his presence passed,
Cheery and graceful in youth's holiday.
Warm, silent sympathy
Waits afar lovingly,
Fearing, yet longing, to tread sorrow's way.

None in the circle wide
Gathered his bier beside
Uttered one thought but of honour and praise,
Merging all shades and views
Into love's golden hues.
How they shall miss him through life's changeful days—
Miss him in saddest hours,
Miss him in gladdest hours,
His voice in the song, and his face at the board ;
The jest that ne'er breathed gall,
Kindly and sweet to all,
The joy-beaming smile and the gay pleasant word.

Knowing him e'er so well
Who with cold words can tell
The beauty of soul and the graces of mind,
Friendship so pure and rare,
Christian views broad and fair,
Wit that ne'er wounded, and humour refined.

Kneeling above his grave
 Where the dark laurels wave,
 Scattering spring violets o'er his green shrine
 Pray we the God of light
 May with his presence bright
 Bring his beloved one solace Divine.

Secretly weep for him
 Tenderly keep for him
 One sacred spot where his memory's beam,
 Like treasured summer rays
 Caught from the vanished days
 Over our future years softly shall gleam,
 Greener than shamrock,
 Sweeter than violets;
 Brighter than laurels, and fairer than fame
 Are the sweet thoughts of him,
 Gleaming thro' shadows dim
 Out of the tracks of light gilding his name.



A Legend of Father Mathew.

WITH measured tolling on the sultry air,
 Through cloudless sky and golden glory fair,
 Clear from the bell-tower pealed the voice of prayer,
 At the setting of the sun.
 With white hedge-blossoms (as their own hearts pure)
 The children garlanded the church obscure,
 Where thronged the worshipping, grief-laden poor,
 Their daily labour done.

A woman passed along the dusty street,
 Her years were many, still at noon-tide heat
 She toiled for bread, then sought the calm retreat
 Of thankful, prayerful rest.
 Each evening saw her bear a shining crown
 Of brilliants, woven 'neath the world's hard frown
 And at the altar gladly lay it down,
 Faith's precious off'ring blest.

As one who knew the sacred precincts well,
 A corner dim, where deepest shadow fell,
 She sought, and by the old confessional
 Drew out her beads and prayed.
 Slow passed the brown stones through the fingers old,
 Dropping her "aves" like bright links of gold,
 And down her withered cheeks the tears fast rolled,
 Her thoughts, unbidden, strayed.

Out of the buried past each dear, dead face
Rose up before her in the holy place,
Through time and distance did her soul retrace
Life's pleasure and its pain.

A drowsy mist stole o'er her weary ken,
She, for the moment, was a child again,
The dying echoes of the last amen
Fell on her ear in vain.

The doors were closed, the aged sacristan gone,
The church all dark, save where a pale ray shone,
A fixed star before the Holy One,
Lone in the silence deep.

O'er Finbarr's city hung night's sacred spell,
But hark ! at that dread hour what meant the bell
Of all who heard none could the meaning tell,
It broke the seal of sleep.

As from a trance, with dreamy wonder dazed,
The woman rose, then sudden sunk amazed,
So strange the vision was on which she gazed,
A weird, unearthly scene !

Our Lady's altar all ablaze with light,
And kneeling there, in stole and cassock white,
Chalice and Book, all, save the acolyte,
A Friar Capuchin !

Surely that face was of the sainted dead,
'Twas mystic light that holy radiance shed
In circling glory round the low bowed head,

Yet 'mid the rays, alas !

One shadow lingered—thrilling, deep, and clear,
In tones that froze the list'ner's blood with fear,
The spectre presence cried : " Is no one near
To serve at Holy Mass ? "

Earth never sounded by grief, loss, or pain
The depths of suff'ring in this sad refrain,
Which, thrice-repeated, echo gave again

Back to the silent night.

The figure vanished with a dirge-like sigh.
Like one who drowning, sees a ship go by,
And she who heard, Our Lady's statue nigh,
Crouched low till morning light.

The day through gates of golden amber broke,
The world to labour, love, and sorrow woke,
The woman nothing of her vision spoke

Till day was waxing old ;

Then knocking humbly at the convent gate
Found ready entrance to the " hall of state,"
A bare, cold room where Friar Mathew sate—
To him her tale she told.

“ Tell none,” he whispered, while he fain would seem
To treat the story as an idle dream,
Yet in his mild eyes shone a tender gleam,
His heart with pity stirred.
Dismissed with blessings and encouragement,
Forth on her way the aged pilgrim went
While Father Mathew, full of deep intent,
Thought o’er the tale he heard.

Night softly folded o’er the pale, dead day
And all fair things, her misty mantle gray,
St. Francis’ shrine in solemn beauty lay,
A priest kept vigil there.
The mellow moon-beams made a halo bright
Round kneeling priest and wreathed altar white,
When hark ! a sound that broke the hush of night
Thrilled through the silent air.

Lifting his eyes from off his breviary,
(Was it a dream or dread reality ?)
The priest beheld, slow from the sacristy,
A vested friar pass.
Through nave and chancel rang that woe-charged cry,
(With reverent awe he drew the altar nigh,)
In solemn accents came the firm reply—
“ There’s one to serve at Mass.”

Kyrie Eleison ! Fervent, strong, and sweet,
The soul's petition to the mercy seat,
Rose with the fruits of the Oblation meet,
A perfect sacrifice.

Thus spake the presence : " Now the rite is o'er—
Joy, light, and rest are mine for evermore ! "
On Mathew, kneeling at the vestry door,
He turned his radiant eyes.

" When my pure spirit, full in Tabor's light,
Beyond the crystal gates, redeemed, and white
Feasts on the beauty of the Infinite
Which I so long to see.

Thou didst my last dark earthly stain remove,
Whate'er thou prizest most, all things above,
With all the strength of full and perfect love,
My soul shall crave for thee.

" Though unforgotten by my brethren dear,
Still in God's prison-house, in severance drear,
For this glad hour I've waited many a year,
My debt to Heaven to pay.

One winter's evening, many years ago,
Home to my convent hastening through the snow,
With hands uplifted, rocking to and fro,
A woman barred my way.

“ Father ! ” she cried, “ to ease my husband’s fire,
Without confession made to priest’ or friar,
He died at sea, Oh, grant my great desire—

Say Mass on Lady Day ! ”

Through sleet and snow I saw her, shivering, pass ;
I trod new scenes in other lands ; alas !
My ready-given promise and that Mass
From memory passed away.

“ Say to what end thy fondest hopes aspire,
Reveal the secrets of thy heart’s desire,”
Then Mathew answered, and zeal’s ardent fire
Beamed in his kindling eye.

“ O sainted spirit, when at God’s right hand,
Amid his shining angels thou dost stand,
Plead for my people, crush the fated brand,
Hear Patrick’s children cry.”

A temperance banner in the next day’s light
O’er Finbarr’s city waved triumphant, bright,
And lay and cleric leagued against the might
Of Ireland’s enemy.

Blessing and blest the Friar his way pursued,
His tones invited and his smiles subdued,
Like his great Master ever doing good,
He passed o’er land and sea

One by One.

ONE by one the old ties sever,
Links drop off from friendship's chain,
Golden links that years can never
Gather up and knit again.
Some are parting, some departed,
Friends like thee, with truth like thine,
Be they blessed, the dear true-hearted,
Cherished friends of "Auld Lang Syne."

Sad we count the vacant places
Made by every broken tie,
One by one the friendly faces
Leave us as the years go by ;
One by one the voices pleasant
That have made life's melody,
Drop away and rob the present
Of its sweetest harmony.

Could warm wishes e'er surround thee
With earth's best and purest pleasures,
Peace and love had ever crowned thee
With their wealth of richest treasures ;
Many tender wayside flowers
Did'st thou scatter o'er our way,
May their sweets perfume the hours
In the twilight of life's day.

One by one the old ties sever,
Links drop off from friendship's chain
Golden links that years can never
Gather up and knit again.
Thou art linked with memories olden,
Tender thoughts of thee remain,
And within the precincts golden
Love shall bind each broken chain.



Blessed Didacus Joseph.

The following poem was composed for the occasion of the Solemn Tridium, celebrated at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Charlotte Quay, on the 18th, 19th and 20th February, 1895, in honour of Blessed Didacus Joseph, Capuchin Friar, who was beatified by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII., on the 22nd April, 1894.

IN far Assissi, on one golden day
 Arose a star, whose pure angelic ray
 Beamed on all nations, kindled love's desire
 Till coldest hearts glowed with seraphic fire
 The name of Francis, like a holy chime,
 With ceaseless music rang from clime to clime
 Above the tempest of life's surging sea.
 The sweet revealings of that melody
 With high aspirings filled the souls of men,
 And with new light illumed their mortal ken.
 They heard his call and promptly cast aside
 The grand insignias of pomp and pride.
 Soldier and statesman, belted knight and peer,
 As little children thronged to see and hear
 The wondrous man who could the world so move
 Who won by gentleness and ruled by love.

Over this restless, ever changing world
 Have rolled the centuries, and downward hurled
 The royal potentates from place and power ;
 Swayed by the favour of the passing hour,
 At passion's will the less became the great,
 In chains the monarch mourned his altered state ;
 Preachers of falsehood, strife and anarchy
 Insulted truth by misnamed liberty ;
 'Through fall of nations, revolution's change,
 And all earth's wonder-workings new and strange,
 Where'er faith's gospel sheds her glorious light,
 Assissi's banner waves unsullied, bright.
 Age after age fresh pearls of sanctity
 Enriched the Church from that enduring tree—
 The martyr's palm, the dew of penitence,
 The virgin's chaplet of white innocence.

'Tis spring ! The heart of Christendom is glad.
 From olive groves and hills with vine-wreaths clad
 They've travelled far, that noble pilgrim train,
 For God's great glory and the joy of Spain.
 The Church is chanting a new psalm of praise ;
 Lo ! on her brow a new gem shines, whose rays
 Reflect the radiance of Assissi's star,
 And with fresh lustre gilds its calendar.
 'Tis Spain's Apostle, the true child of prayer,
 Whose sainted name doth grace the pages fair,
 Didacus Joseph wakes that matchless strain
 That floats and swells along the mighty fane.

They come, the sharers of his name and race,
 'Neath Peter's dome to take their honoured place—
 Princes and peers out his glad praises sing,
 Whose virtues made him more than lord or king.

The ardent souls whom still the earth retains,
 The land of cleansing fires and cleansing pains,
 The ransomed, purified, who ceaseless sing
 Their glad hosannas to the angels' king,
 With Didacus Joseph to-day rejoice,
 "Blessed" proclaimed by Rome's unerring voice.
 Far-winding echoes from each belfry
 Triumphant ring the Vatican's decree ;
 Wisdom, long sought in piety and fear,
 Strength, counsel, knowledge, understanding clear,
 Crown Heaven's new patron with Faith's diadem,
 A fragrant blossom of a fruitful stem.
 In early childhood, in his Spanish home,
 He heard Alveono's seraph whisper, "Come !
 Choose thou the mission of a lowly friar,
 And God shall grant to thee thy heart's desire."

But one deep sorrow marked our sainted boy,
 And chilled the ardour of his holy joy ;
 The light of genius from his vision fled,
 His mind was clouded with a darkness dread.
 In vain he strove from learning's varied store
 To cull the riches of scholastic lore ;

But God, who chose this weak and humble flower,
 Made him a miracle of grace and power ;
 Strengthened by penance, vigils, poverty,
 Before the Cross his mental shadows flee.
 Not for the glory of the preacher's fame,
 Not that men's plaudits should enshrine his name,
 His raptured soul in thankfulness bowed down—
 In Calvary's school, beneath the thorny crown,
 In close communion with the Crucified,
 He found the pearl of knowledge long denied.

Weary and faint, in freezing cold, or heat,
 He daily travelled with bare, sandalled feet,
 His burning words enchaining as they fell
 The hearts of multitudes in love's sweet spell.
 For evermore, till earth shall cease to be,
 The Church, invoking her rich Litany
 Of intercessions at the mercy seat,
 Shall call him " Blessed " and his aid entreat.
 When o'er the villages night falls serene
 And evening " Aves " greet the Virgin Queen,
 Didacus Joseph with " Maria " blends
 And in soft accents to God's throne ascends
 In our own land, by persecutions tried,
 The seed of Francis ever fructified ;
 To Spain's Apostle give we these glad days
 Our triple crown of honour, prayer and praise.

The Shamrock.

LET poets chant their lays anew
To praise the rose or violet blue,
The queenly tulip, filled with dew,
And lily sweet and fragrant ;
But there's a flower more dear to me,
That grows not on a branch or tree,
But in the grass plays merrily,
And of its leaves there are but three—
'Tis Ireland's native shamrock.

My country's flower ! I love it well,
For every leaf a tale can tell,
And teach the minstrel's lays to swell
In praise of Ireland's shamrock.
The emblem of our faith divine,
Which blessed St. Patrick made to shine
To teach eternal truth sublime,
Truth that shall last as long as time,
And long as blooms the shamrock

Oh ! twine a wreath of shamrock leaves,
They decked the banners of our chiefs,
And calmed the Irish exile's griefs,

 In distant lands a stranger.

The muse inspired, with words of praise,
The poets of our early days
To write, in many a glowing phrase,
And sing in powerful, thrilling lays
 The praises of the shamrock.

He who has left his island home,
Beneath a foreign sky to roam,
And in a foreign clime unknown,

 How dear to him the shamrock !

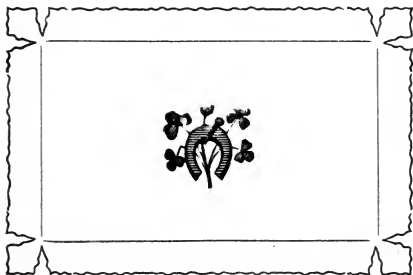
When, on the feast of Patrick's day,
He kneels within the church to pray
For holy Ireland far away,
He feels again youth's genial ray
 While gazing on the shamrock.

The brightest gems or rarest flowers
That ever bloomed in tropic bowers
Could ne'er for him recall such hours

 As could the simple shamrock.

Sweet memories, like refreshing dew,
The past, with all its charms, renew,
The Church, the spot where wild flowers grew,
The faithful friends, the cherished few
 He left to cull the shamrock.

Land of the West, my native isle,
May heaven's blessings on thee smile,
And banish foes that would beguile
 The lovers of the shamrock !
May God for ever cherish thee
In peace and love and harmony,
And rank thee proud 'mid nations free,
So pray thy children fervently
 For thee and for the shamrock !



The Shamrock in Florence.

FOLDED in a loving letter,
 Deep imbedded in soft mosses,
 Travelled once a tiny seedling
 From the margin of the Lee
 To the floral land of Florence,
 Where for some time dwelt a maiden
 Whose dear motherland the poets
 Ca led the Emerald of the sea.

What the seed would be she knew not,
 But it came from distant Ireland,
 Whence she prized the slightest token,
 Ivy leaf or purple shell ;
 For so true was she to Erin
 E'en fair Italy could never
 Hold one tender thought a captive
 From the land she loved so well

So with tender hand and careful
 Planted she her far-sent treasure,
 Watered it and daily watched it
 Till three green leaves crowned the stem.
 To and fro, from school, the children
 Passing wondered what the strange plant
 On the sunny window growing—
 Only three green leaves to them.

Then the lady told the story—
How of old a priest, called Patrick,
Brought from Rome Faith's priceless jewel
 To the children of the Gael ;
From his lips their pagan monarch
Heard the blessed revelation,
Saw the pearl of truth clear shining
 In the Gospel's wondrous tale.

Questioned much the king, and marvelled
That the Father, Son and Spirit,
Co-existent in one Godhead,
 Reigned through all eternity ;
Softly through the dew-drops gleaming
Saw the saint a sprig of shamrock,
And its trinity of leaflets
 Preached the wondrous mystery.

So above all flowers we prize it,
On the graves our tears bedew it,
Far away our exiles bear it
 As a link of the old land :
And the lady told them proudly
In strange lands the shamrock perished,
But the city of the flowers
 Erin's child could not withstand.

The Ivy of the Sacred Heart.

'Tis not the children of the bowers,
 Fond nurslings of the Summer hours,
 Red rose or virgin lily pale,
 That reads, my friend, the sweetest tale ;
 A little trembling ivy spray,
 Transplanted here one Autumn day,
 The whole year long, through sun and rain
 Keeps guardian watch around her pane.

'Mid shining flowers it hath its birth,
 That bright and fragrant make our earth ;
 It watched them fade and bloom anew,
 Yet lived the changeful season through,
 In light and shadow still the same ;
 The hallowed meaning of its name—
 The ivy of the Sacred Heart
 A tender lesson doth impart.

Some lover, with a poet's eye
 For God's least gift on earth or sky,
 In tint, or form of leaf, or flower,
 Or bright-winged creature of the hour,
 Traced in the ivy's heart-shaped leaves,
 The story of that heart that grieves
 And loves, beyond conception's art,
 The pearl of faith—the Sacred heart.

The ivy tender watch doth keep
Above the green graves where they sleep
Whose hands twined, long ago, the sprays
That shimmered in the old log's blaze.
Ah, 'twas a graceful fancy sweet
To find in it an emblem meet
Of that all-satisfying Heart
Whose love can heal the keenest smart.

'Tis love that purifies our youth,
That out-lives sorrow, pain and ruth,
Nor fades when gone life's sunny day,
But, ivy-like, hides all decay ;
That guides our footsteps down the slopes,
And plants above our ruined hopes
The bright immortal passion flowers
That blossom in eternal bowers.



Sonnet to Saint Agnes.

WITH modest courage, eyes undimmed by tears,
 She stood before the tyrant in his might,
 Her martyred soul prepared for that high flight
 Which soars above all earthly craven fears ;
 A fair child crowned with thirteen golden years,
 Her rapt gaze fixed as on the vision bright
 Of her Love's glory breaking on her sight ;
 She heeded not the soldiers' savage jeers ;
 She heard the Bridegroom's mystic whispering,
 So sad, so sweet, as if from Calvary's height ;
 And Calvary's shadow touched her soul's bright wings,
 And in her virgin wreath she longed to twine
 The crimson passion flower with lilies white
 And shining roses for her Spouse Divine.

In Loving Memory of the Right Rev. Dr. O'Mahony, Bishop of Toronto.

Right Rev. Dr. O'Mahony, Curate at St. Fin Barr's, Cork, was consecrated Bishop of Armidale, 30th November, 1869, and died at Toronto, where he was auxiliary Bishop to Dr. Lynch, 8th September 1892.

HOME at last, earth's toil is ended,
Past the long, long day of years,
And the heart that loved and suffered
Rests beyond the gate of tears.
Safe where never jarring discord
Breaks the perfect harmonies
Of the songs of grace triumphant
Floating o'er the jasper seas.

Not in green and pleasant meadows
By the waters cool and clear,
With old workers in the vineyard,
To long cherished friendships dear,
Hath the Master willed his mission,
But in steep and rugged ways
Where labour done for Love's sweet sake
Hath sanctified his days.

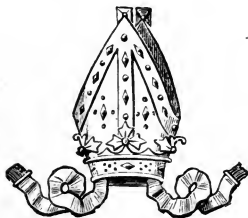
On his memory rest the glory
Of the pastor's burning zeal,
From death's voiceless holy silence
Praise alone shall lift the veil.
Deeds are virtue's best revealings,
And the mighty fame that lives,
To his faith and patient labour
Highest, noblest tribute gives.

In the lives blest by his teaching
Still his sainted spirit breathes,
And the reverence of his people
Crowns his name with fadeless wreaths.
In the spiritual creation
Of new life and purity,
God alone can count the harvest
Gathered by his ministry.

Mourning flocks, that daily listened
To his blessed words of truth,
Do ye miss your faithful shepherd
As we missed him in our youth ?
Hushed the sweet-toned voice that lingers
Like an old sweet spell of grace,
Sad the day when you no longer
Look upon your Soggarth's face.

While the Church's solemn music
Heavenward floats in prayer and praise,
Blended with our earnest pleadings,
Steal the thoughts of vanished days.
When he prayed and preached amongst us,
Winning like Assisi's dove,
By his strange resistless charm
Winning souls to grace and love.

'Mid the emblems of affection
That perfume this hallowed earth,
May we twine one flower of feeling
From the island of his birth,
Culled from warmest recollections
Fragrant with the prayers and tears
Of the hearts that knew and loved him
In the far away dead years.



True to the Dead.

THE parting rays of eventide
The peaceful churchyard glorified ;
They strayed among the gravestones old,
And tinged the ruins gray, with gold.
They smiled upon a little child,
Bearing from vale and woodland wild
Bright greenery from garden bowers,
A basket filled with shining flowers.

She sat beside a sheltered mound,
And placed her treasures on the ground,
And wreathed in the twilight hush
Buds glowing with the sun's last blush ;
Carnation white and mignonette
And roses with the dew mists wet,
With purple pansies bright, that tell
That dear ones still in memory dwell.

With loving hands she garlanded
The sacred cross above the dead,
Then, kneeling in the deep'ning gloom,
Sent up to God the blest perfume
Of innocent beseeching prayer,
That light may find the sleepers there ;
Then left her precious gifts to die,
And give the dead their last sweet sigh.

Screened from her by a spreading tree,
Slowly telling his rosary,
A curé watched, and sadly thought
The little one the grave has sought
Of parent dear, or sister kind,
For whom the dewy wreath was twined,
And grieved to think that she should stand,
Thus early, close to shadowland.

She passed into the twilight gray,
The good priest blessed her on her way,
Then paused beside the grave and read
The story writ above the dead ;
How fifty summer moons did fade
Since mourning hearts first wept and prayed
And strewed with flowers the earth's green breast
Where lay their aged sires at rest.

Through all the changes, joys and fears,
That marked life's course in fifty years,
The old man held a sacred place
Among the children of his race ;
They learned at evening, round the hearth,
To love his name and know his worth ;
And never was the green grass bare
Of fragrant flower and humble prayer.

Would that such tenderness were shed
In every home around the dead,
Could they but dwell with us again
How hard we'd try to soothe their pain.
Yet heed we not the low, sad call
That ever on our hearts doth fall—
Have pity, ye whose lives we blest,
Help us to pass the gates of rest.



The Last of an Old Friend.

INSCRIBED TO THE LADY OF RATHLEE.

TENDERLY old visions greet us,
 Tinged with memories warm and bright,
 Waking quaint and pleasant pictures
 In the Christmas fire to-night ;
 Gleaming softly 'mid the ivy,
 Shining on the holly sprays,
 How they crowd and chase each other
 In the glowing embers' blaze !
 Red flames flash from floor to roof-tree,
 From the heart of an old friend,
 Nobly friendship's task fulfilling,
 Giving pleasure to the end.
 Once this Yule log, crowned with beauty,
 Reigned the glory of the Lee—
 Changes great have come and many
 Since thy birth, old Sally-tree.

Dreaming youth beneath thy shadow
 Caught from hope such radiant beams
 That the fair glad world of nature
 Seemed reflected in its dreams ;

There, perchance, in riper wisdom,
Was conceived some burning thought
That hath blossomed into action
And a noble deed hath wrought.
In the hush of summer twilight
Round thee gathered old and young,
Hand clasped hand in friendly greeting,
Tales were told and songs were sung.
Last of all thy graceful sisters,
Guardian monarch of the Lee,
Youth and age, and love and sorrow,
Sought thy shade, old Sally-tree.

In the days when youth and maiden
Sported on the village green,
When the ring of happy laughter
Woke to life the rural scene ;
Then were rifled field and forest
For the games of merry May
When night dews were on the meadows
And the moonbeams cheered the way.
Still did'st thou survive the pillage
Of the gay, mirth-loving past,
But e'en trees must own life's power,
And we mourn thy fall at last.
One wild night the wind in anger
Fiercely swept across the Lee,
And with ruthless hand he levelled
To the earth our Sally-tree.

Ere the last red flame has quivered
And thy life's warm pulse is dead,
Whilst the Christmas stars are shining,
Ere the last bright beam has fled,
I would cast this wreath of ivy
On thy embers as they fade,
And in simple verse embalm thee—
Tribute for thy friendly shade.
While thy ashes are yet fragrant
With the memories of the past,
Let us pray that friendship's blessing
May be with us to the last.
When the early blush of summer
Lights again upon the Lee,
Loiterers on its banks shall miss thee
From thy place, old Sally-tree.



Granny's Last Watch.

IT was New Year's Night ; the hail fell fast,
Round Berry Glen Cottage loud moaned the blast ;
The hour for the sailor's return was past ;
The merry bells chimed out a peal of mirth,
A wrathful sky frowned on the New Year's birth,
But love's welcome lighted the cottage hearth.

The bright wood-fire's beams the old shelves among
Played like household elves in a merry throng,
Flickering, shimmering, dancing along,
They set every corner and nook in a glow,
While the dead year, laid in his shroud of snow,
Slept cold 'mid the shadows of long ago.

The windows in Berry Glen faced the sea,
And there shone a beacon-light cheerily,
Love's home-star of hope burning constantly.
Granny Lee kept watch with the fond young wife,
Their hearts' tendrils twined around one brave life,
And he was abroad on the ocean strife.

Earth's hopes for old Granny were past and dead,
 Save this one warm ray, her dream-days were fled
 Ere smiled her companion in cradlè bed.
 Life's bead-roll had numbered full sixty years,
 Yet deep in her chalice were unshed tears—
 Her heart was still haunted by human fears.

“Hark, hear ye the wild blast?” she wailed, “Asthore,
 Sure 'tis wilder still where the breakers roar—
 Hearts will break to-morrow on Dursey shore,
 And what shall our news from the ocean be?
 Will the light of our eyes come back from sea,
 Or down in the blue depths sleep silently?”

Her withered hand clasping, close by her chair
 Knelt Winnie, the bride of one summer fair,
 And cast all her love on a cry of prayer:
 “Hope, Granny,” she whispered, “our Willie is brave,
 He'll stick to the mast while there's one to save.
 God help him to battle with wind and wave.”

In agony keen was the vigil kept,
 And the fierce wind never a moment slept,
 Till day's first blush o'er the gray rocks crept;
 Then the tempest stilled, the storm passed away,
 The treacherous waves danced in sunny play,
 The beacon light turned to its last faint ray.

Then Winnie, the bride of one summer fair,
With a sad heart rose from her battle prayer,
And tenderly leaned o'er the grandame's chair ;
But the form was still, for at deep midnight
A messenger paused on his upward flight,
And folded old Granny in pinions white.

And the sailor who smiled at his cottage door,
When June daisies broidered the meadow floor,
Through his native fields wandered never more,
The united spirits of Granny Lee
And her boy sailed over the mystic sea
Through death's love-lit port to eternity.



A Song : Alley Bawn.

ALLEY BAWN, dear Alley Bawn,
When we met beside Sullane,
'Neath the flushing April skies,
There was trouble in your eyes.
But the big tears would not fall
And your smile shone bright through all
As you whispered, " Fergus, fly !
They'll be on us by and by,
For they heard our Fenian men
Were ahide in yonder glen.
Oh, the black, black hearts that sold .
All their precious lives for gold ! "

Alley, oft your faithful light
From the old mill window bright,
Flashed the signal beam to tell
That the pass was guarded well .
And when danger hovered near
Love for Ireland banished fear
To the drill-field, through the brake,
Past the banshee-haunted lake,
Oft you sped at dead of night
When the vale with snow was white,
For the boys were there, you knew,
And your gentle heart was true.

Never more, dear Alley Bawn,
'Neath the willows by Sullane,
At the hush of eve we'll stand
Dreaming dreams for the old land,
Reading Ireland's future story
By the reflex of past glory,
While the new hopes blossoming
Decked her virgin brow with spring.
And they tell me, o'er your grave
Memory flowers in shamrocks wave.
Alley, in my heart for you
I keep pansies twined with rue.



Called Away.

I HAD one flower so sweet and rare,
It shed its fragrance everywhere—
My only one, my Lily fair.

One day from Heaven a message came
That filled my heart with keenest pain—
God wanted back His gift again.

My little one grew tired of play ;
The playthings all were put away—
My flower had bloomed her little day

My winsome sprite of life and glee
Her years had scarcely numbered three—
But, ah ! what was she not to me ?

Down to our earth, by sin defiled,
God's angel came, and o'er my child
Fluttered his snowy wings and smiled.

He hushed my darling into rest,
Laid the white blossom on her breast,
And bore her to the Mansions Blest.

I miss the baby prattle sweet,
The laughing eyes, the dancing feet,
That morn and eve I used to meet.

But she is blooming pure and free ;
Near the white throne she waits for me,
And joyful will our meeting be.



Passion Sunday, 1898.

SILVER JUBILEE OF THE CONSECRATION OF IRELAND TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

The following verses are dedicated to the "Guard of Honour" of the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Charlotte Quay, Cork, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Ireland's consecration to the Sacred Heart.

NOT for the genius whose immortal pen
Has swayed the minds and thrilled the hearts of men,
Not for the artist whose conceptions grand
Win praise and reverence in every land ;
Warriors, statesmen, or scientists great,
Whose wondrous power new worlds of thought create ;
Nor yet for cloistered nun, nor sainted priest,
Dear motherland awake ! prepare your feast
Of honour, praise, adoring Jubilee !
Out of the fullness of your treasury
Scatter you gifts before the King of Kings !
Let the blest fragrance of your offerings,
Sweeter than perfume of the sweetest flowers,
With acts of love incense those Sabbath hours !
Allied by suffering to the Sacred Heart,
No land more meet love's solace to impart.

Long centuries past, when yet the Church was young,
 And shades of darkness o'er the nations hung ;
 Whilst might of tyranny, held by the sword,
 All fair things blighted ; the barbarian horde
 Wave after wave of desolation spread,
 With homes and altars making havoc dread—
 A peaceful sanctuary was Patrick's sod,
 A garden blooming neath the smile of God.
 A fair oasis on the earth's dark face.
 The favoured home of nature, art and grace.
 Firm and unchanging as her ancient hills,
 Pure and spontaneous as her limped rills,
 Brilliant and fervid as the noontide sun
 Earth in her full meridian brightness shone,
 And 'neath her steady, vivifying ray
 Knowledge and virtue held united sway.

Alas for Erin of the spotless name !
 Time holds the record of her peerless fame—
 For all the glory of her golden age !
 'Twas hers one day to write the bloodstained page !
 In secret places Mary's beads to tell,
 And weep and sigh for sound of chapel bell !
 To feel the keenest throes of sorrow's dart
 And find no refuge but the Sacred Heart !
 To see the clouds of persecution break,
 And faithful live and die for Jesus' sake !
 Then had she need of all that mighty band
 Of ransomed souls that sanctified our land ;

Need of their help to keep unsullied, pure,
 The faith they held in life and death secure ;
 To foil with vigilance the tempter's art,
 And win their triumph in the Sacred Heart.

Under the shadow of the holy Rood
 Were sown and nurtured priceless seeds of good,
 From lonely hiding place in wood and rock,
 Where hunted shepherds met their faithful flock,
 The Heart whose great love crimsoned Calvary
 Heard the sad wailings of their misery,
 And when the dark clouds from our island green
 Had passed away, and Freedom's light serene
 Beamed on our altars, set our prelates free,
 They laid the crown of their fidelity—
 A precious gift of consolation sweet—
 Unstained and shining at the Pontiff's feet ;
 Praying in gratitude and humbleness
 That Rome's decree would seal, unite and bless
 The land that rack or gibbet could not part
 From closest union with the Sacred Heart.

Wreath for the Sacred Heart your palms hard won,
 No richer dower than thee hath Christendom !
 Entwine your prayers, your famine-wasted sighs,
 The tears of anguish in the mother's eyes
 When from the cradle came sharp hunger's cry,
 And one by one she saw her blossoms die

That might have flowered in beauty in her home,
Did she but barter the fair pearl of Rome.
Across the altar lights, the garden blooms,
The swiftly nearing shade of Calvary looms ;
From far Jerusalem Hosannah rings
And Crucifige blends sad echoings !
King of the Cross, in these Thy passion hours
Close to Thy Heart place this loved land of ours !
Her sorrows, joys, hopes, missions, destiny,
In solemn league we pledge anew to Thee !



Among the Lilies.

THERE are lilies white and golden
 Blowing in the valleys green—
 Lilies rare, their sweets unfolding
 On the altars of our Queen—
 Lilies, by sad sick-beds dying,
 Lilies over new graves sighing,
 And our white-souled Lilies lying
 Neath the dew and summer sheen.

Mystery of growing wonder !
 Near, and yet so strangely far—
 Not e'en death earth's ties can sunder,
 Though beyond the farthest star,
 Love can follow there and find thee,
 Links of prayer and faith can bind thee
 To the hearts that calm, resignedly,
 Wait to cross the shining bar,

Lily ! many a lovely blossom
 Drooped beside thy bed of pain,
 Since the snow lay on earth's bosom
 Till the sunshine smiled again.
 While the martyr's crown was twining
 'Neath the Master's touch refining,
 And the dawning glory shining
 Of love's full and perfect reign.

Into sufferings bitter chalice
 From thy lips dropped no complaint,
 For the mystic bridegroom's palace
 Patient trials fit the saint.
 Sheltered safe in cloistered bowers,
 'Mid the Church's virgin flowers,
 Bloomed thy girlhood's brightest hours;
 Free from shade of earthly taint.

Happy memories of thy sweetness,
 Gentle words and loving ways—
 All the sweeter for their fleetness,
 Wake with every word of praise.
 Thoughts of thee with thoughts of sorrow
 From thy future ne'er shall borrow,
 Care or trouble for the morrow—
 This, the blessing of our days.

Sabbath bell and music holy
 Float about thy quiet rest,
 Near to thee the Great King lowly
 Dwelleth in the Chapel blest.
 From thy home of hope-crowned promise
 Thy pure spirit beams upon us,
 And the turf that hides thee from us
 Oft by kindred feet is pressed.

At Rest.

“No more pain and no more sorrow,
Do not weep, 'tis better thus,
From her life a lesson borrow,”
Thus they try to comfort us,
When we saw the death dew's gather
On the dear, beloved face,
And we knew her tender Father
Folded her in love's embrace.

This we knew, and yet the t-ars fell,
All the anxious, weary years
Better seemed than this long farewell,
Crushing all our hopes and fears.
Hoping, fearing, all was over,
God had claimed her for His own,
With the holy ones that hover
Ever round the shining throne.

Close the sweet eyes, wont to meet us
Smiling through the open door,
Kiss the fond lips, they shall greet us
With love's welcome never more.
Teaching by her patient meekness,
She, our suffering, sainted one,
Dearer still from pain and weakness,
Peace, beloved ! our task is done.

Upward through the starry brightness,
Where no shadow lurks beneath,
Where the Lmb of snowy whiteness
Twined for thee the well-won wreath.
Patient soul, the night is breaking,
Thy dark night has come and passed,
Weary heart, blest be thy waking
Near the Sacred Heart at last.

Children's voices, sweet and winning,
Sister's love or mother's heart,
Brother's fondness round thee clinging,
Nought can reach thee where thou art.
Spring's sweet flowers thy grave adorning,
Sunshine brightening the fresh sod,
Sad we left thee one March morning,
In thy dreamless rest with God.



Daisy.

IF I but knew
 A rhymer true
 I'd tell him where to find a theme—
 A winsome sprite,
 Airy and light
 As ever charmed poet's dream.
 A vision sweet
 His eyes should greet,
 All love and innocence and mirth ;
 Sportive and gay
 As woodland fay—
 The daisy of the cottage hearth.
 A pearl of pearls,
 With auburn curls,
 A laughing mouth and eyes of blue
 As lambkin fleet
 Her dancing feet
 Trip o'er the garden bright with dew,
 She questions flowers
 In sunny bowers,
 At home with all fair, spotless things
 From morn to noon
 A prattling tune
 Of mimic speech like music rings ;

Your heart 'twould cheer
To see and hear
Her happy, childish ecstasy:
The eager rush,
The liquid gush
Of rippling, bird-like melody.
Like summer bloom
She chaseth gloom ;
There's not in nature aught more sweet
Than this fair child,
With glee half wild—
Our bonny Ethel Marguerite.



Louis Veuillot's Last Poem.

WHEN death's bright angel brings God's message blest,
You will place at my side my pen ;
The cross, my proudest glory, on my breast :
At my feet this volume : and then
Softly close my coffin in peaceful rest.

When you breathe the last prayer in solemn awe,
Plant the crucifix o'er the dead,
(The grand, saving sign of Redemption's law).
If they mark by a stone my bed,
Let them write on the slab, " J'ai cru, je vois."

Say among you, " He sleeps, his days are passed,
His life's laborious tasks are o'er ? "
Say rather, " He wakes, he sees at last
The heaven he dreamed of evermore,
By the perfect light o'er his spirit cast."

From slander's breath shield not my memory,
Should hatred's blight on me descend,
I am content, I have my victory—
Truth can with evil powers contend,
I have fought the good fight, my soul is free.

The men who make this vile attempt of hate,
 Are those to whom my name is bound ;
 While I at mercy's portals wait,
 Let them say on—perhaps each wound
 Shall throw in shadow my offences great.

I am in peace ; let their malignity
 Rage on till rage is satisfied.
 Blesséd be God for this that now I see,
 Still can I preach Christ crucified—
 In dust e'en yet I am their enemy.

Thrice bless'd be God, my voice still strong and clear
 Persecutes those who dare to lie ;
 What they insult I honour and revere ;
 The truths imposters' lips deny
 Believing, worshipping, I hold most dear.

On many souls I shed the light of day ;
 I cheered the fettered captive's doom ;
 For heavenly angels I made clear the way,
 To hearts where fairest flowers shall bloom,
 And love be born and hold supremest sway.

My life was sweet, though lost my early years ;
 On bare rocks, washed by ocean's spray,
 The moss grows green : so, on remorseful fears
 Repentance shines with sun-bright ray,
 When sorrow spends itself in bitter tears.

My life was happy, brightened by my love ;
In my hard fight faith fortified
My charmed heart, and made it strong to prove
The strength of true love, purified
From earthly stain, and firmly fixed above.

I was a sinner, missing oft the light
That glory sheds round virtues ways ;
But now, thank God, His truth divinely bright
Has doubt and error swept away—
Penance and prayer have chased the clouds of night.

In Christ on earth I placed my hope alone,
I blushed not at His law or name,
The last dread day, before His Father's throne,
He will not blush, but veil my shame—
My King and Lord shall claim me as His own.



The Gift of Kindness.

EACH life hath its seasons of springtime and flowers,
 Of success and failure, of dark and bright hours,
 With crosses and crowns every pathway is strewn,
 Some meet joy at morning, some find it at noon ;
 But earth holds one treasure that all may retain,
 We miss it in pleasure, we need it in pain,
 It rings in the voice, and it beams from the eye,
 The sweet gift of kindness—let none pass it by.

Cheerless the hearth that its light doth not warm,
 Loveless the life that its smile cannot charm,
 The dew soft'ning sorrow, the hearts living spring,
 It takes from the sharpest affliction the sting.
 A sparkling oasis that shines ever green,
 Its beauty can brighten the dreariest scene,
 In the world's wide tempest we hear its low cry,
 'Tis repeated in Heav'n—oh ! pass it not by.

It may be one syllable kindly expressed,
 But deep in the lone heart it findeth its rest,
 The soft word once spoken is heard through long years,
 And echoed again, oft in sorrow and tears ;
 It blooms in the garden, it blooms in the glade,
 Forget it in sunshine, 'twill seek you in shade ;
 There's no lot too lowly, no station too high,
 For this wound-healing blessing—pass it not by.

We may learn the lesson in life's daily school
Untrammelled by system, unfettered by rule,
In full flowing measure be it freely quaffed—
No class, creed or party can poison the draught.
We move in its circle, it's with us always,
It smiles on our threshold more sweetly each day,
Kind thoughts, pleasant words, upon white pinions fly,
They are earth's priceless treasures—then pass them not by.



Baby May.

HAPPY mother, rich to-day,
With thy litle winter blossom,
God's fair blessing, on thy bosom,
Breathing all the sweets of May.
Like the beauty of the wood,
May our off'ring of fond wishes
Crown her life with surest issues,
Pure and true and sweet and good,
That these priceless gifts, we pray,
May environ Baby May.

* * * * *

Fair, as fair as summer's day,
Flit the bright years fast away,
Every fleeting day a treasure,
Not e'en love can count our measure,
Half the wealth of pure, sweet pleasure
Centred in our household fay.
Her flowering grace perfumes our hearth,
Her merry music wakes our mirth,
There's naught so dear on this fair earth
To many hearts, as little May.

YB 13699



